

Handbook No. 24

1914

The Alexandra,

Queen's Ave., March 19th, 1914.

To The Superintendent,

Of the Toronto General Hospital,

Dear Sir:-

As a lease holder in the Alexandra Apartments, may I call your attention to a matter which much concerns my comfort. It is the extreme publicity, attending the removal of the dead from what I suppose is the mortuary of the Hospital. The door facing Christopher St., having no covered portico, is in full view of all passers by in University Street and the Avenue as five of my windows face east, every time the undertakers vehicle crawls up at the door, I cannot fail to see it. It seems to come at all hours. I have seen it between 12 and 1 o'clock and between 3 and four o'clock. It attracts a crowd from the "Ward". On one particular Saturday afternoon a number of men and boys assembled, some of them even going in through the open door to be chased out more than once by the caretaker. However they remained until their morbid curiosity was satisfied, by seeing the stretcher brought out and placed in the vehicle. These sights will also be in full view of your private ward patients when enjoying the sun rooms which face south. When strangers are driven through our beautiful avenue en route to visit the Parliament Buildings, I think such sights will appear to be most unseemly; the door of the mortuary of the Hospital facing the principal drive in Toronto, and the dead carried out, in full view, at all hours of the day!

It has been suggested that as the Pathological Building is in connection with the University the authorities there should be responsible and should build the necessary screen or portico, but as the mortuary is

for the convenience of the Hospital that seems untenable.

Is it too much to ask you to bring this matter before the Board of Governors at once, so that the public may not be distressed by these daily sights? If the door I have mentioned was built with the intention of being used as an entrance to the mortuary, certainly a great architectural error was made and the public will surely protest.

I have received a circular asking for a subscription towards the support of public ward patients but until this distressing want of respect for the dead is removed I must decline, and if the Board of Governors have not already considered the advisability of erecting some screen or are unwilling to do so, I must most reluctantly, through the daily papers call attention to the subject.

I am very sorry to have to complain and am sure that, with all your most arduous duties, the matter I have troubled you with has not come under your notice.

To add point to my complain I must tell you what occurred this morning. A small boy was found looking out of the front door of the Alexandra and a lady asked him why he was standing out such a cold day. " I am looking for the dead cart" was his reply. I do not think I need add anything further!- and with many apologies for trespassing upon your valuable time and patience, remain,

Yours truly,

(Signed) S. Stratford.

Address:-

Mrs. John H. Stratford



